

A
Commemora-

tion of the life and death

of the Right Worshipfull and vertuous Ladie; Dame *Helen Branch* (late Wife to the Right worshipfull Sir *Iohn Branch* Knight, sometime Lord Maior of the famous Citie of *London*) : by whose godly and vertuous life, Virgines are insinuated to virtue, wiues to faithfulness, and widdowes to Christian contemplation, and charitable deuotion, &c. Which godly Ladie left this mortall life (to liue with Christ Ihesus) the 10. of *April* last: and lieth interred in the Parish Church of *Saint Marie Abchurch*, nigh vnto *Canwicke streete*, the 29. day of the same month.

1594.

Fidenti sperata cedunt.

I. P.





3.

A Commemoration

of the life and death of the Right wor-
shipfull and vertuous Lady Dame *Helene Branch*, late wife
to the Right Worshipfull Knight Sir *John Branch*,
sometime Lord Maior of the famous Cittie
of London, &c.

If vertuous deeds doe merite praise, and penetrate the skie,
Why should not we record their lines, that Godly line and dic:
To th'end that such as now doe live and on the earth remaine,
Might learne to pace sweet vertues paths, & vicious waies dis:
And that by them posterities, to come might learned be. (Daine,
To serve the Lord when as the lives, of his deere Saints they see.
Here Virgins yong are taught the way, to famous wisdomes bowler,
Here may they see to their contents, upon the finest flower.
Here married wivnes a loadstarre have, to leade them from abuse,
Here Widdowes are instructed still, vertue to put in use.
Here iustice sits to give her doime, here truth her cause doth pleade,
Who doth revive our Helens name, though she to world be dead.
I speake not I of Helena that sickle Gretian Dame,
That cauld the Greeks so; Paris rape, to set all Troy on flame:
But I a vertuous Helene minde, whose life when you behold,
Deserves so; to be registred in letters woth with gold.
The stocke from whence she sprang, God garnished with grace,
Her Parents were right godly bent, to vertue they gave place,
And as she grew in yeares the Lord her wisdom did increase,
Whose name to praise and magnifie, his servant did not cease.
So Virgins Helen Nicolson did give a golden light,
Shee by her deeds did shew them up in godnes to delight,
First unto God her honour due, most reverently she gave,

Shee was the
Daughter of
M. William
Nicolson and
Ioane his wife
Citizen and
Draper of Lon
don,

A 2

And

A Commemoration, &c

her virgin
life.

And to his Parents as a childe his selfe shee did beane.
 Shee was not stout nor stubbozne found, but gentle, meeke and milde,
 All baine and wanton idle wordes, were from his lips erild,
 That Honster pride within her breast, could neuer barbour finde,
 Humillitie bare soueraigne sway, within his hart and minde,
 Shee brags not of her beautie bzaue, although it did excell,
 Shee knew as God had giuen it him, to grace his bodie well,
 So beautie should in future time, through crooked age decay, (clar.
 And that the woymes shee did his, consume, when flesh should shroud in
 The beautie of his fillie soule, therefore by faith shee sought,
 His hope was set on Iesus Christ, that with his blood his bought,
 And he of loue did beautifie, his conscience with his Grace,
 Because shee kiste his sacred seare, all times before his face.
 Thus thus shee led his virgins life, to his increas of fame,
 Would Virgins all in these our daies, would exercise the same,
 Then wantornnes and lust should die, & pride should fall downe quite,
 And maidens by virginitie, would neuer set so light.
 But God the Lord of life and time for Helen did prouide,
 And shee vpon his prouidence, did constantly abide.
 Her parents wills shee (willingly) at no time would gainsay,
 Nor rashly seke (as some doe now) to cast themselves a way.
 Thier will they hold a law no doubt, these parents may not mell:
 For wed they will without consent, betide them ill or well,
 Our Helen was not of this crue, reason did rule her minde,
 vnto her parents wills, her will, was euer more inclinde.
 married to mr. In twedlocke they their daughter gaue, vnto a worthy wight,
 for. p. minors: A Citizen of London faire, Iohn Minors he was hight.
 And of the Drapers Companie, a man discrete and wise,
 And such a one as firmly first Gods seare before his eyes.
 Our Helen was his onely top, and he her harts delight,
 He loued her, and shee with loue, her Minors did requight.
 And though this yong new wedded wiffe, were but of tender age,
 Shee shee to her selfe to husband hers, a courteous Sara sage.
 Obedient vnto his helts, shee was at euery becke,
 With modestie her selfe shee clad, shee feard to haue a checke.
 A godly life shee alwayes led, vprightly shee did deale,
 Her cheerefull care was bent to wish, and worke her Minors weale.

And

Helen Nicolson, Ladie Branch.

5.

And God beholding how that they in loue did spend thir time,
 Indensing to praise his name, and shun each sinfull crine.
 From heauen the swarte deawes of his grace did on them both distill,
 He blessed them with health and wealth, that did obey his will.
 And in his mercies milde and swarte, their ioyes soz to increase,
 One sonne and daughters thre to them, he gave as pledge of peace.
 Which in Gods feare to foster vp they were right willing found,
 As therunto by Gods commaund, and nature they were bound.
 A g. den meane our Helen kept, her drinke was smallest beere,
 Swarte Temperance was the mistress and soundes of her chere.
 With wine she was at deadly warre, erce she did disdaine,
 Content was taster of her cates, his guest she did remaine.
 Yet plentie swete within hir house did beare the soueraigne sway,
 At no time emptie from hir gates, the hungry went away.
 Hir seruants had their meate and drinke, in time and season betwixt,
 Here wedded iours a Phenix rare, soz vertues ble may betwixt.
 Penelope, Vlisses wife, more constant could not be,
 Then Helen was to Minors kinde, the world did plainly see.
 But that great God that giueth life, hath set downe his decree,
 That vnto death both yong and old, in time should subiect be.
 Clotho the distaffe loathes to hold, Lachesis will not spin,
 And Parchas soz to cut liues thred in sunder doth begin.
 Their children he from them doth take, their houre glasse was run,
 They murmerd not, but were content, with that which God had done.
 For well they know that God that giues, can also take away,
 For King and Duke, yea rich and poore, are subiects vnto day.
 But loe when that these louers true, had soztie yeares bin wed,
 And vnder ilde ussured sozt, had held their marriage bed.
 The enemie of life prepares, the fatall stroke to strike,
 He spares not one, soz all estates, to Atrapos are like.
 The husband from his wedded wife in time he did bereane,
 And soz to waile his death with teares, his Helena doth leane.
 But though that death did life subdue, his faith in Christ Gods sonne,
 Hath giuen him life with Iesus Christ, though death his worst hath done,
 Yet in hir secret hart she doth hir gentle Minors chere. (done,
 And wetts hir cheekes with bynnysh teares, from conduits of hir eyne.
 But on the liuing Lord of hostis she made hir only stay,

*But by m.
in st. m.*

*married to
m. st. m.
about 40 years*

And vnto him for mercie sweet most constantly did pray,
 And God the mightie Lord of hostis, his hand masse did behold,
 And vnto hir the gifts of Grace, did louingly unfold.
 For vnto Sir Iohn Branch sometimes Lord Mayor of this Cittie,
 Our happie Helen wedded was being full of loue and pittie,
 As he by iustice ready was to worke faire Londons weale,
 So to the poore this Lady had a seruent loue and zeale.
 In fruitfull loue this gentle knight, with Lady his did line,
 And vnto God both they and theirs, did daylie glorie giue,
 But fading time that runnes forth right and neuer stands at stay,
 From this god Lady toke hir knight, and closed him in clay,
 But death in Sir Iohn Branch god knight, no doubt remaineth dead,
 For Iesus Christ above the skies with glorie crownes his head,
 A woefull Lady Helen liues, to heauen she makes hir mone,
 And prostrate falls for comfort swete, before Gods glorious throne.
 To watch to fast and pray she settled hir delight,
 And at hir booke did vse to sit from morning untill night.
 She to the Dyapers companie in hir life time did giue
 A stocke of fifty pounds no doubt poore youngmen to relieue,
 One man for to enioy the same, for fearme of foure yeares space,
 And intrest none at all to pay, but praise God for his Grace:
 And then the money rendred, two young men of that trade
 Shall haue that fiftie pound in vse, on hands sufficient made.
 And thus this money shall no doubt from man to man be lent,
 According to this ladies minde, hir meaning and intent.
 She generally vnto the poore, hir large almes deeds extended,
 The poore distraught in Bethlem, she hath often times befrended,
 Saint Marie Abchurch well can tell the loue to them she bare
 With money, coales, and cloath, she did relieue poore peoples care.
 Where were the sicke that she refused to comfort in distresse,
 This Lady helpt the widdowes want, and fed the fatherlesse.
 Where were the blind, the soze, and lame, that had not of hir copie,
 Either sought she not to stay their moode, that would fro poore purloine,
 Where was hir hart, hir hand, and purse, at any time found slacke,
 To comfort those that wanted aide, and cloath the naked backe:
 Then Ladies all example take, by this most vertuous Dame,
 And learne by hir whilst life yett haue, to conquer death by same.

Gods

2.
 married to
 Sir Iohn Branch
 Knight

2.
 so: to young
 Dyapers

Abchurch

Gods feare was fixed in hir sight, hir honour still she sought,
 Against the world sin, death and hell, a battell she hath fought,
 Faith was hir shield, Christ was the rocke, on whome she sought to
 And he by grace hath made hir cleane, that was with sin defilde, (build
 Thus wisdom in hir boze the sway, vertue did rule the raine,
 Who taught hir still that worldly pompe and worship was but vaine,
 Thus being mindefull of hir end as one that needs must die,
 Shee hir last will in perfect minde did make right orderly,
 Wherein to Marie Abchurch shee a legacie did gine,
 And of a long continuance to such as there doe line.
 The famous vniuersities this Ladie had in minde,
 To students paye that vertuous be, sweet comfort shee assignd,
 To prisoners paye in London shee, and Southwarke here and there,
 Hath money giuen to helpe their grieke, as plainly may appeare,
 The hospitalles in generall, this Lady did remember,
 And poore maides marriages to mend, hir care was not found slender,
 Tinto hir friends and seruants all this kinde and louing Lady,
 Hath left a portion of hir stoe, as orderly as may be.
 Shee giuon to men and women paye, bequeathed by hir will,
 And readie rests the executor, hir meaning to fulfill.
 This was a steward of the Lord, ordained for the paye,
 Whom shee in soule and spirit still, did reuerently adoe,
 Where might shee help, that once to hurt, shee euer gave consent,
 When shee receiued ill for god, to doe god shee was bent.
 But God the mighty God of grace, that gave hir life and breath,
 Arrested hir with sickness sharpe, and sickness wrought hir death.
 But as in health in sickness shee, the Lord of hostes did praise,
 And in true faith and feare of him, shee sought to end hir dayes,
 Her Lamp was fullie fraught with Oile shee builded on the rock,
 And at the glorious gates of grace, for mercie shee did knock.
 And that eternall spotles Lamb, of graces his most god,
 From all hir sinnes hath clensed hir, in his deare death and blood.
 Pon Ladies all behold hir life, and marke hir vertuous end,
 And whilst you liue vouchsafe in time, to make sweet Christ your friend
 For when that death began forthwith, his pageant for to play,
 Shee humbly gaue hir soule to Christ, and left hir corps to clay,
 Her friends doe wail, her kindfolke weepe, her neighbours all lament,

*her legacies
to the poore.*

*Robt. Nicolson
sole executor.*

8. *A Comemoration, of Helen Nicolfson Ladie's Branch.*

Hir seruants sob, the poye crye out, but teares in vaine are spent. Downe
Then cease your plaints this Ladie liues, though death haue cut hir
Sweet Christ in heauen with gl'ry great, hir happie head both crowne.
*about 90 yeeres
old at her death* Foure score ten yeares she liued here, in credit praise and fame,
And dying to the world she left, no doubt a spotles name.
And thus good Ladie from thy friend, receaue thy last farewell,
Thou transte this world to liue with Christ, with whome thy soule
doth dwell.

Virginitas Lauis Alia.

*Collected by
H. J. 1714*